

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Scott Fletcher, a Government Accountability Office detailee to the Senate Armed Forces Committee, have floor privileges during the consideration of S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2017.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Kimberly Knackstedt, a fellow in Senator MURRAY's Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee office, be granted the privileges of the floor for the remainder of this Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Beau Diers and Lauren Fish, defense legislative fellows in the office of Senator COTTON, be granted the privilege of the floor during consideration of S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Elizabeth Joseph, a Health Policy Fellow in the office of Senator COCHRAN, be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the 114th Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider en bloc the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 506 and 507 only, with no other executive business in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Jennifer Choe Groves, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade; and Gary Stephen Katzmman, of Massachusetts, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today the Senate is considering the nominations of Gary Katzmman of Massachusetts and Jennifer Choe Groves of Virginia to fill judicial vacancies on the U.S. Court of International Trade. It is a step in the right direction that the majority leader has agreed to take these nominations, but two other nominees to the Court of International Trade remain pending on the Senate floor. There is no good reason we cannot also confirm these nominees today.

I support the confirmation of both highly qualified nominees. Since 2004,

Gary Katzmman has served as an Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Appeals Court, the State's second highest court. Before joining the bench, Justice Katzmman served for over 20 years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts. In addition to his superb credentials, Justice Katzmman's family is part of our Nation's history of providing refuge to those fleeing persecution. Justice Katzmman's father and grandmother came to the U.S. as refugees from Nazi Germany.

Jennifer Choe Groves has over 20 years of legal experience working in private practice and the government, having served in the New York District Attorney's Office and in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. When confirmed, Ms. Groves will be the first Asian American and Pacific Islander judge to serve on the U.S. Court of International Trade.

While the Senate is taking up these nominees today, the majority leader has allowed just 18 judicial nominees to be confirmed since Republicans took over the Senate majority last year. Contrast this dismal record to the last 2 years of George W. Bush's administration, when Democrats were in control. At this same point in the Bush Presidency, Democrats confirmed 68 of President Bush's judicial nominees.

Senate Republicans have allowed only a trickle of judicial confirmations despite the fact that, under their watch, judicial vacancies have nearly doubled from 43 to 85. Of these, 29 have been designated as judicial emergencies where caseloads are unmanageably high and the administration of justice is strained.

The harm that Republican obstruction has wrought on our Federal courts extends from the trial courts across America to our Nation's highest court. Today marks 82 days since Chief Judge Merrick Garland was first nominated to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court. Under the Senate's recent timeline for considering judicial nominees, Chief Judge Garland should have received a hearing and a vote by now. Instead, Senate Republicans have continued as their party standard bearer has said to "delay, delay, delay." This has resulted in a diminished eight-member Supreme Court that has been repeatedly unable to serve its highest function under our Constitution.

It is the Senate's duty to ensure our independent judiciary can fully function. I hope Senate Republicans understand that obligation and act on Chief Judge Garland's nomination, as well as the 22 judicial nominations that will still remain languishing on the Senate floor after today.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Groves and Katzmman nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

AUTHORIZING THE TAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE SENATE CHAMBER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 484, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 484) authorizing the taking of a photograph in the Senate Chamber.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 484) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF ESCORT COMMITTEE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the President of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join with a like committee on the part of the House of Representatives to escort His Excellency Narendra Modi into the House Chamber for the joint meeting at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, June 8, 2016.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2016

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, June 7; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader